

AMERICAN HOMES_{AND} GARDENS

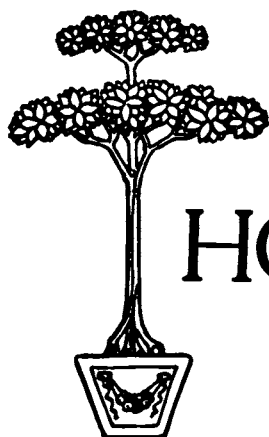


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AMERICAN HOMES AND GARDENS

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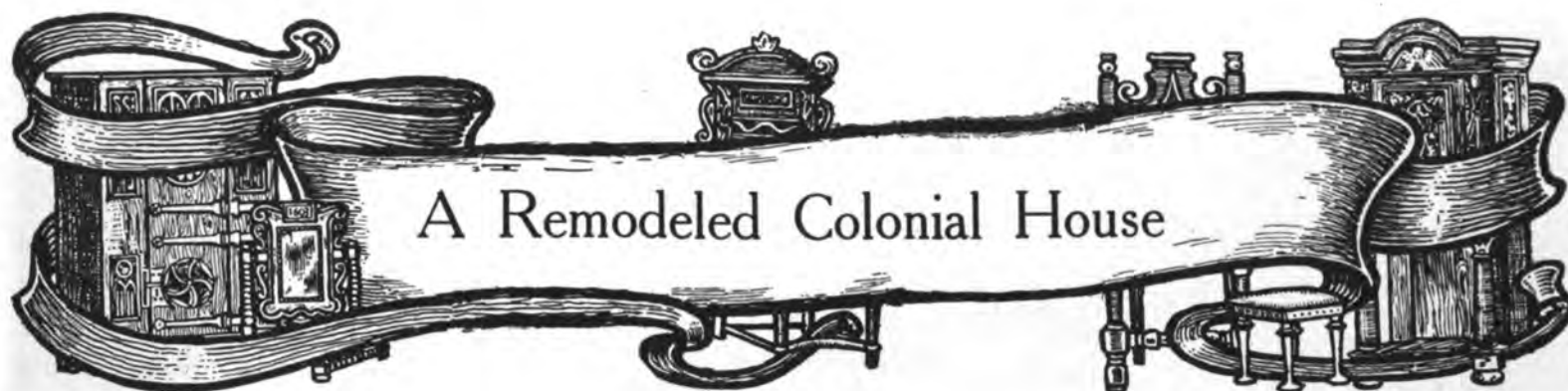
FREDERICK CONVERSE BEACH, Secretary and Treasurer
361 Broadway, New York

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The Country Seat of Frederick Converse Beach, Esq., at Stratford, Connecticut: The Great Portico of the Front



A Remodeled Colonial House

The Country Seat of Frederick Converse Beach, Esq., at Stratford, Connecticut

By Charles Chauncey

THERE is no more beautiful village in Connecticut than "Old Stratford," but it is not only its beauty, its fine streets and its magnificent trees that attract and please the visitor to the village, but more especially its historical associations, which are not only admired by the traveler but loved and revered by the descendants of the sturdy little band of pioneer planters who came and settled the town in 1639. The pic-

turesqueness of its situation is remarkable, for it is delightfully located on the banks of the Housatonic River to the east, Long Island Sound to the south, and to the north and west rise the peaks of the "Seven Hills."

The place was known as "Cupheag," a name given to it by the Indians, and signifying "a harbor" or "a place of shelter," so it is not surprising that the men and women who came with the Rev. Adam Blakeman should make their landing at "Little Neck" and find shelter and peace in so



Old Rose Brocade Covering for the Walls, and Ivory White Trim, Is the Color Scheme for the Hall. The Double Staircase Is Unusual



The Sun-room Has Green Painted Walls, Ivory White Trim and Willow Furniture with Turkey Red Upholstery



A View from the Hall Looking into the Drawing Room



There Is an Effective Planting of Evergreens About the South Side of the House



The Pergola-like Cover



ing through the Library
ing-room



The Walls of the Dining-room Are Covered with Tapestry. Mahogany Furniture of the Sheraton Style Is Used



ing for the Well Curb



Doric Columns and a Classic Frieze Are Used for the Sun-room

delightful a spot. With all these associations and environments it is not surprising that a descendant of one of the early planters should return to "Old Stratford" and reclaim the sacred land of his ancestors.

When the late Alfred E. Beach was seeking for a healthful and peaceful residence, he purchased a plot of land on Elm Street, with its boundary extending to the Housatonic River, beyond which broad views of Long Island Sound were obtained. He subsequently purchased the adjoining property on which there was a great Colonial house, and established what was termed the "Stratford Institute," creating a place where his children might be educated, as well as the children of other gentlemen of the village.

It was a great house, with stately Doric columns supporting a pediment at the front. A mere glance at the exterior



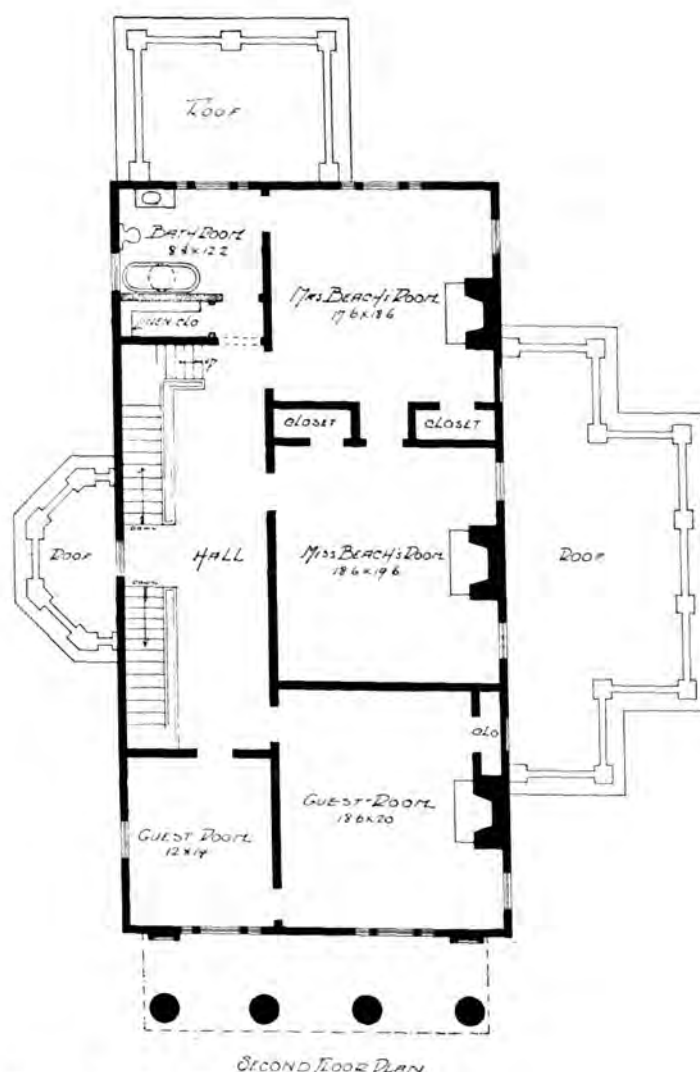
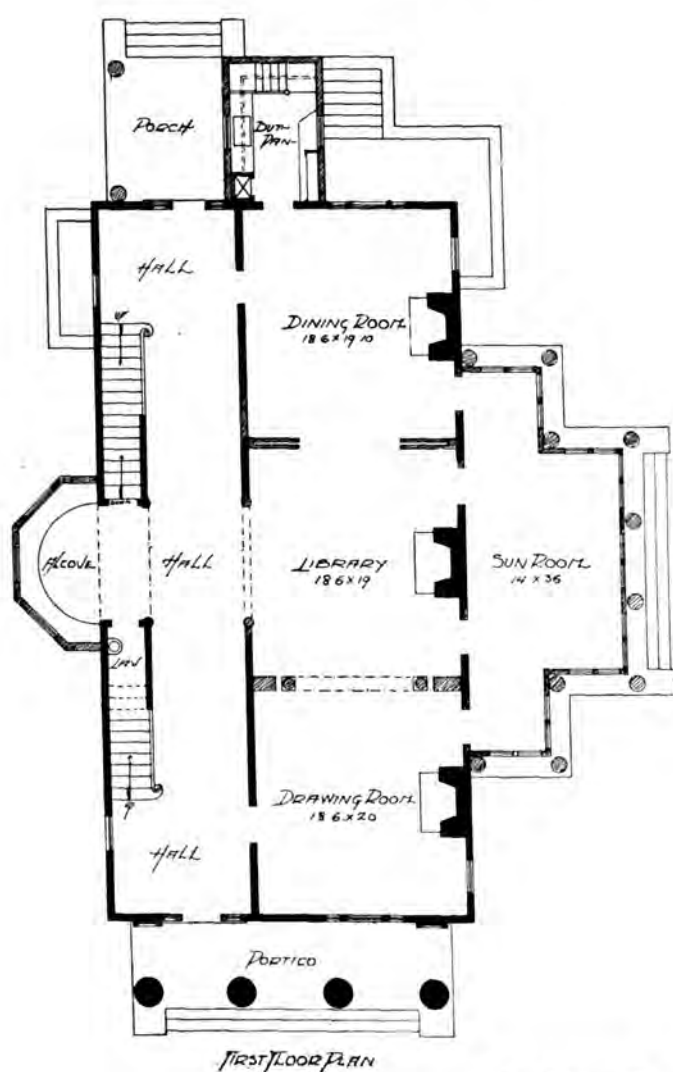
The House Before the Alteration

for it is a splendid old house and is a fine example of Georgian architecture.

The house was built in 1826 by Gen. Matthias Nicoll for his son-in-law, Capt. George R. Dowdall. General Nicoll furnished the materials for the house, and Messrs. Beardsley Brothers built it, according to specifications prepared by General Nicoll.

The form of the house is quite unusual for a house of the period in which it was built, and its plan, showing the

hall on one side and the three succeeding rooms on the other, is equally so; but this arrangement is best explained by the reason that Captain Dowdall was a seafaring man and was about to retire from following his profession. While making his last voyage to China, and during his absence, his wife, who was a daughter of General Nicoll, knowing that her husband might be an "uneasy sea-dog," concluded to build the house with a great hall twelve feet in width and sixty-two



Dotted Lines Show the Alterations to the Floor Plans

feet long, the length of a ship's deck, so that he might have a place in which to walk and exercise. To utilize this great length it was found necessary to build three rooms deep, each one being twenty feet square. She also built in the hall a twin staircase, rising from both the front and rear entrance doorways, to a broad joint landing at the second story. This was done so that the "sea-dog" might think himself going up to the hurricane deck on one side and down to the main deck on the other. The idea created an unusual arrangement not to be found in any Colonial house of record. In order to make a schoolroom, Mr. Beach removed all the partitions between the rooms on the first floor, and it remained in this condition until the present owner placed it in the hands of his architect, Mr. Francis Durando Nichols, of

Bridgeport, Conn., for the purpose of transforming it into a modern residence. The house was in a good state of preservation and was in reality only waiting for a future development, rather than a transformation. The main detail was classic;

the portico, at the front, was excellent, but the length of the house was too great for its width, so that in order to break the elongated lines the architect built a large bay window on the north side, and on the south added a sun-room, with detail and Doric columns to correspond with the classic character of the older parts. A butler's pantry was built on the east end, together with a new porch which was required. This concluded the additions to the exterior.

The absence of superfluous ornaments, and the solidity of the walls of the house, which were built of wood and lined



The Remodeled House Showing the Exterior Changes Made on the North and South Sides

with brick, offered ample opportunities for modification and enrichment. Woe to the architect, however, if any change had been made without restraint, good taste and judgment, which considerations, if not rightly heeded, might have made the place lose the distinction of character which was only waiting to be developed. The amount of change has certainly not been excessive, and the improvements have been carried out in sympathy with its subject and its environments.

The underpinning had bulged out, so it was found necessary to jack the house up, tie it together with steel rods and rebuild it. The platform on which the portico rests was rebuilt, but the front door was maintained, except that new

wall opposite and on the right side of the hall and repeat the arch and columns. By this alteration a broad transverse vista is extended through the library, taking in the fireplace, and beyond to the sun-room.

The hall and the interior throughout contained a simple trim with fluted bands and corner blocks. This was retained, and on the level of the window sills a heavily molded chair rail was extended around the hall and the three rooms on the first story, up the stairways and around the hall of the second story, creating the effect of a Colonial wainscoting, which enhanced the value of the interior decoration. The classic detail of the exterior was repeated throughout the interior,



Mahogany Furniture of the Colonial Period, a Queen Anne Mirror, Banjo Clock, and an Old Franklin Stove in the Fireplace Are Some of the Ornaments of the Library

leaded glass side windows and transoms were inserted. In the interior the great school-room was divided into three rooms—a drawing-room, library and dining-room. The drawing-room and library are in reality one room, though they are separated by an archway supported on Ionic columns, while a wall containing sliding doors was inserted between the library and the dining-room. The sun-room was built so that it might be easily reached from each of the three rooms. The old windows were removed, the wall cut to the floor, and French windows were installed, forming convenient access to the sun-room.

The fine old staircase, rising from either end of the hall, formed an archway, at the corners of which were fluted Ionic columns. The wall space was broken at the north side of the house and a great bay window was built, which was lighted by three windows, in front of which is placed a circular window seat. This made a very attractive feature, but to increase the beauty of the effect it was decided to break the

and a cornice eighteen inches in depth, and of a character similar to the exterior frieze, was built at the intersection of the wall and ceiling throughout the first floor.

In the hall the wall space between the wainscoting and cornice is covered with a German wall paper in two tones of old rose with a heavy brocaded finish, while the walls of the drawing-room and library are covered in a two-tone mustard-colored silk. The dining-room walls between the wainscoting and cornice are covered with tapestry in green trees on a blue background.

The staircases in the hall, which are of mahogany, have been cleaned down, and in the removal of the varnish a compass in inlaid work was discovered on the top of each newel just where the rail sweeps down and forms a circle.

Oriental rugs in harmonizing colors of old rose, yellow and brown cover the highly polished floor of oak, while a thousand legged table, Chippendale chairs, an Empire sofa upholstered in old rose, a grandfather's clock, and family

portraits complete the ornaments of the hall. The portrait over the staircase is that of Moses Y. Beach, the founder of the New York Sun, and the grandfather of the present owner.

The columns and archway between the drawing-room and library are very effective. The library has an old Franklin stove with brass trimmings built in the fireplace and resting on a red-tiled hearth. Facings of similar tile are provided, harmonizing well with the Lake Coma marble mantel. An old banjo clock, a Queen Anne mirror hung over the antique tea table, an Empire bookcase and chairs, form a happy and harmonious furnishing for the room.

inclosed with glass doors in small lights. The radiator for this room is also a plate warmer, which is a great convenience for a pantry, specially where the kitchen is on another floor. A staircase leads down into the butler's pantry on the level with the kitchen, which is also fitted up with a dresser and ice-box. A laundry off the kitchen is fitted with porcelain tubs. There are plenty of closets and dressers provided in all the service part of the house.

The second floor of the old house contained a hall room at the rear and a bathroom where the stairs to the third story now ascend. The bathroom was removed to the third floor for the use of the servants, and a staircase, the same as the



The Archway Beneath the Double Stairway, with the Bay Window Beyond

The sun-room has the same wooden cornice as the library, and, together with the trim, is painted ivory white, while the wall space is painted an ivy green. This room is inclosed with glass, and is furnished with green willow furniture and upholstery of turkey red, and a rug of two-tone red.

The dining-room is a very handsome apartment. It is furnished with mahogany. The sideboard, china-cabinet, table and chairs are of the Sheraton style, except that the table has a pillar, instead of the corner legs of a true Sheraton dining-table, which is in good taste, but it might be noted that Sheraton never designed a pillar table.

The butler's pantry is conveniently placed, and contains a butler's sink, dresser, with drawers below and shelves above,

main stairs, was continued to the third floor. The rear hall bedroom, being twelve by twelve feet, and containing two large windows, formed an excellent position for the bathroom. Ample space was taken off this room for a linen closet.

The bathroom was wainscoted in white enameled tile and finished with a blue and white egg and dart molded cap. The fixtures are of porcelain, and the Roman bathtub is supplied with a shower and needle bath equipment. Over the Roman lavatory is placed a medicine closet with a beveled plate mirror, and with electric fixtures at each side. All the hardware trimmings for the bathroom are nickelplated.

The front hall room has a wall decoration in warm gray stripped wall covering, with a frieze of baskets of pink roses

(Continued on Page 153)



FIG. 7

Design for Divan Cover or Floor Mat
(Alaska Indians)



FIG. 8

Design for Divan Cover or Floor Mat
(Alaska Indians)



FIG. 9

Design for Divan Bolster
(Navajo Indians)

designs for stencil work based on Indian models. Their adaptability as well as real interest should be apparent at a glance. They combine, in a marked degree, distinguishing characteristics of beauty and novelty. The latter is an important element often desired in decorative work of this sort, and

not often so well supplied as here. While each of the designs here illustrated has been actually employed in stencil work, they are offered more as types of what might be accomplished than as definite suggestions. They obviously point the way to much individual ingenuity.



FIG. 10

Design for Border on Portieres, Lambrequins or Frieze for Wall
(Mexican Indians)



FIG. 11

Design for Border on Portieres, Lambrequins or Frieze for Wall

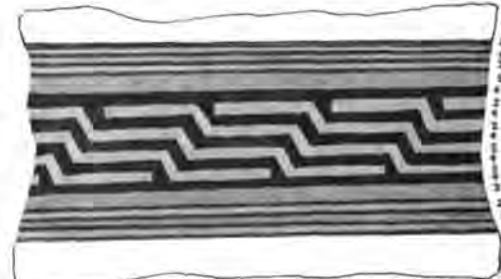


FIG. 12

Design for Border on Portieres, Lambrequins or Frieze for Wall
(Zuni Indians)

FIG. 7.—*Color Scheme*.—(1) Brown madder; (2) Van Dyke brown (alternate on both sides); (3) white; (4) indigo; (5) light cerulean blue. Repeat same scheme on both sides.

FIG. 8.—*Color Scheme*.—(1) Buff—mix yellow ochre and Van Dyke brown; (2) indigo; (3) deep vermilion; (4) white.

FIG. 9.—*Color Scheme*.—(1) Buff; (2) black; (3-4) French gray—mix Paynes gray and cerulean blue; (5) terra cotta—mix vermilion, Indian red and Van Dyke brown; (6) Van Dyke brown. Outline all stripes with black, leaving narrow white stripe between. Alternate colors of stripes in regular order.

FIG. 10.—*Color Scheme*.—(1) Tan—mix yellow ochre and burnt umber; (2) black; (3) dark Indian red—mix Indian red with Van Dyke brown; (4) white. Narrow lines, black.

FIG. 11.—*Color Scheme*.—(1) Light indigo; (2) deep indigo; (3) emerald green; (4) white; (5) black; (6) pink.

FIG. 12.—*Color Scheme*.—(1) Fawn—mix Paynes gray yellow ochre and a little crimson lake; (2) light cadmium—vary to flesh color—mix yellow ochre and rose madder; (3) cerulean blue; (4) deep indigo. Narrow lines, deep indigo.

The Country Seat of Frederick Converse Beach, Esq., at Stratford, Connecticut

(Continued from Page 141)

suspended on ribbon hangings. The adjoining guest room is finished in lavender, with a wall covering in gray, decorated with lavender Iris. Miss Beach's room is in two-tone pink satin stripped with a border in pink roses. The owner's room has a wall covering in a Dresden stripped paper of green, pink and blue-yellow. All the woodwork is painted ivory-white.

The third floor contains two servants' bedrooms and bath, one extra guest room, den and dark-room. Stairs lead to the attic, forming an ample space for storage. The house is thoroughly equipped with a telephone system from the kitchen to all the rooms, electric lighting system supplied by a private plant, and a steam heating apparatus with an indirect system for the first floor. The electric fixtures in the hall, drawing-room and library, as well as the side brackets throughout, were made from a special design, and repre-

sent the old-fashioned girandoles with crystal prisms and suspending chains. The dining-room has a dome of green silk, suspended with green silk cord and ornaments. The fixture in the sun-room represents a hanging group of Ascension lilies.

While the estate had many fine old trees and shrubs, it required some planting which was necessary to soften the lines of the building, which was done under the direction of Charles Downing Lay, landscape architect, of New York City.

It is interesting to note that the property upon which this house is built was an original allotment of land to the ancestor of the wife of the present owner, William Beardsley, who came from Stratford-on-Avon, England, in the good ship "Planter," in 1635. It is to William Beardsley and his company, who came from the home of Shakespeare, that it owes its name of Stratford.